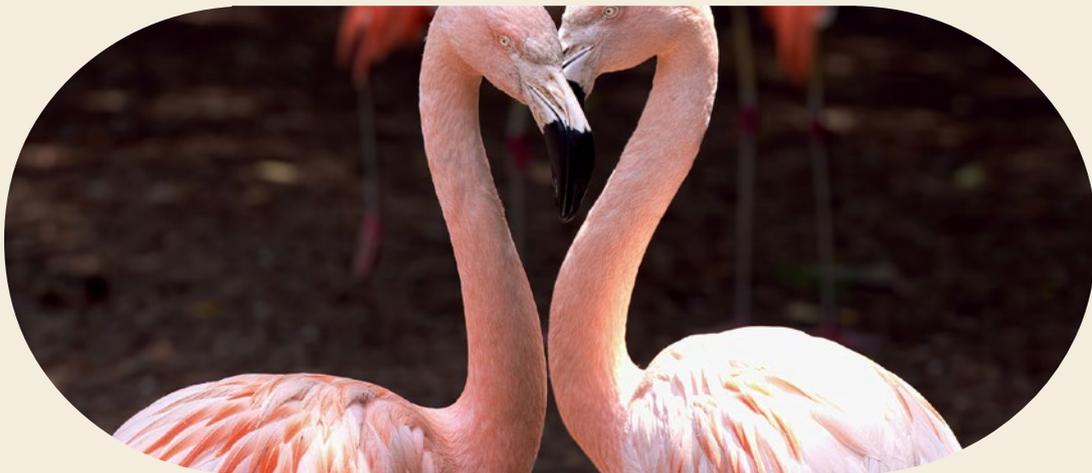




Our Community Matters



Perfect match



Considering a collaboration? If a merger is a marriage, then a partnership is a long-term relationship that might even result in a proposal. Before you take the plunge, read our top 20 tips for finding and keeping the right not-for-profit or business partner.

1. Make sure a partnership is what you want. There are many relationships your organisation can have with a business – it doesn't have to be a partnership.
2. Choose a model or models that suit you and your partner.
3. If you can't find the partnership model that suits, create a new one.
4. Make sure you are ready for partnership – a thorough self examination is critical. You must have the time, resources, and commitment to make it work.
5. Know your own worth. Value all that you have to offer a partner and speak it.
6. Do your homework. Research your target partner – what do they have to give, who do they partner with now, what are their criteria for partnership?
7. Do a reference check – they'll certainly be checking up on you.
8. Make sure your values match. A partnership is set to fail if the partners don't share the same basic values. ►

9. Haunt the places potential partners hang out – chambers of commerce, business clubs, services clubs.
10. Be absolutely certain and confident about what you want and what you have to give.
11. Make it easy for them by putting your partnership proposal in their language and keeping it simple.
12. Consider the main business drivers for partnership for your partner, and use them to your and their advantage.
13. Give them plenty of time to assess your proposal and make a decision.
14. Don't be shy – tell them about your achievements, be your own best referee.
15. Demonstrate that you are a good operator and run a good outfit.
16. Understand that every business will have unique needs from a partnership – there's no such thing as one size fits all.
17. Don't shirk on the planning – invest time and resources in a planning workshop.
18. Have a partnership vision – it's not just fluff, it's the statement that sums up the reason for your partnership's existence.
19. Be selfish in your objectives and expect and encourage selfishness from your partner. The very best and most successful partnerships meet the needs of all involved.
20. Be clear about who is doing what. Having roles and responsibilities decided from the outset is very important.

This is an edited extract from *More than Money: How to get money, resources and skills from Australian businesses*, published by Our Community, \$36. **Buy the book** ■

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Co-operate to propagate



BY DENIS MORIARTY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, OUR COMMUNITY GROUP

If your organisation is made up of good people who always do what's right, then when other organisations tell you they need help, you co-operate with them. After the crisis has passed, you sort out who owes what to whom.

There are other ways, though, to think about intra-NFP co-operation. One point to consider is how any proposal for common effort carries you towards your common goals.

Some evolutionary theorists consider that the point of life is to propagate your genes. The English geneticist J. B. S. Haldane once calculated on the back of an envelope that if he wanted to ensure his genetic heritage lived on, he would be prepared to lay down his life for eight cousins or two brothers. Something of the same principle might work for the propagation of good causes. If the group down the road is working on issues related to yours, its success might give your cause a boost, and the fact that your group wouldn't get the credit shouldn't be a deal-breaker.

Some organisations will be closer to you than others – brothers or sisters rather than cousins – but just about all community groups have some factors in common (or some enemies) and some reason in some circumstances to stand together.

That's why, for example, we're a member of the **Community Council for Australia**, and why you should be too. The CCA is busy scaring the hyenas away from Australia's community sector,

so you could think of the cost as a security expense. It's only about \$110 a year for small groups, which are the ones that really need it, and it'll save you a lot of time in not having to make your own organisation-by-organisation submission every time the government wants to throw the baby out with the bathwater and into the revolving knives.

Seriously, in unity is some protection against schoolyard bullies and ministerial ideologues, and if you put your money where your mouth is, you're less likely to get your tongue cut out.

However much you back the common cause, you still want to be sure that co-operation is a two-way street and that you're not being exploited as a soft touch. It helps to think through possible sticking points in advance, it helps to get something in writing as a pre-nup, it helps to have a dispute-resolution procedure, and it's essential to know what your walk-away point is.

You want to work with other groups where that brings you closer to your goals, and you don't want to be led away from your path to waste precious resources on wild-goose chases after other groups' misguided obsessions.

It's not always easy to know which scenario is which, but the best general rule comes from game theory. Your opening gambit is willingness to work together in good faith. If anyone stiffs you, assume they're going to stiff you again next time, and plan accordingly. And assume that everybody you work with is going to act on the same principle – so be careful not to break your promises. Credibility counts. ■

Great Grant: Future Makers

Optus's Future Makers program aims to address social issues for vulnerable people via technology. It's aimed at innovators who've already got a working prototype.

How it works

Shortlisted applicants will take part in a four-month program that aims to advance their tech solution and build their expertise in business, social impact and technology.

Future Makers includes eight days of workshops in Sydney (flights and accommodation are covered) and a series of webinars.

Participants will receive technology guidance and insights from industry experts.

Optus is offering up to \$300,000 in funding over two stages: technology grants and pitch grants. As part of the Singtel Group, Optus is also offering an opportunity for finalists to progress to stage 3 of the program.

Stage 1 During the program, finalists will have the opportunity to pitch for a small technology development grant to enhance or modify their existing prototype.

Stage 2 Finalists will pitch for further funding to help bring them closer to launching their solution to the market.

Stage 3 Finalists will have an opportunity to apply for the Singtel Group Future Makers Program, where up to two finalists will be selected to participate to help scale their solution.

Program criteria and focus areas

Optus seeks innovative technology solutions to problems affecting disadvantaged youth or adults in the areas of employability, education, health, and empowerment of women and girls.



VIDEO: Danny Hui, a 2017 Future Makers finalist, was awarded \$100,000 to create a tech-based way to help the parents of kids with disabilities to coordinate their care.

Two types of grants may be awarded:

- Small technology development grant: Pool of funds up to \$20,000
- Investment/seed funding grant: Pool of funds up to \$280,000

Eligibility

The following people and organisations are eligible to apply:

- charities and not-for-profit organisations
- non-government organisations
- social entrepreneurs and start-ups

More information

Applications close on Friday 18 May, and finalists will be announced in the week beginning Monday June 11. For more information and to apply, go to www.fundingcentre.com.au/grant/G07179 (Funding Centre log-in required). ■



The Geelong Project helped Northern Bay College student Josh deal with family conflict and financial pressure to keep him at school.

The Geelong Project's stunning results a joint effort

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY

How a small city slashed homelessness, boosted school results and became a model for the world.

There are those who think collaboration is just another buzz word, but not in Geelong. In Victoria's second-largest city, a joint effort by schools, a not-for-profit, a university, a youth agency, and an employment network has slashed youth homelessness, while boosting school retention rates.

Youth homelessness has plummeted by 40 per cent in just three years thanks to The Geelong Project, as it's been dubbed. The number of early school leavers at the three pilot schools dropped 20 per cent, and disengagement levels by those most at-risk kids dropped by 50 per cent.

Regional cities across Australia are now looking to replicate the Community of Schools and Services (COSS) model of early intervention.

The project has been led by the independent, not-for-profit community service organisation Barwon Child, Youth & Family (BCYF), with the close involvement of Swinburne University; Headspace Geelong; the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN); and three pilot schools – Northern Bay Secondary College, Newcomb Secondary School and Geelong High School.

The results they've been able to achieve are astonishing, and it was no surprise to see the project splashed across news services at the release of a detailed interim report demonstrating the work they've already accomplished.

Swinburne University Associate Professor David ►

MacKenzie, who authored the 62-page interim report, described the project as “fanatically focused on outcomes”.

The power of a community coalition

Drawing on past studies connecting family and home life with school performance, the trio of schools and agencies – guided by an executive governance team – used an early intervention model to create a “community of action, a coalition”.

Professor MacKenzie says the group was united by a sense of community, location and vision, and all focused on one question: “What can we actually achieve for these young people?”

“That’s been quite difficult, because we were not just one little program working with 50 kids. We’re taking a whole of Geelong approach, and we’re working intensively in the three most disadvantaged schools.

“The logic of the model is twofold.

“One is to reduce homelessness (because of) family breakdown leading to kids leaving home too early. The other contention is that behind the educational disadvantage, a major part of it comes from the family you’re born into it.”

He says factors at play could include whether your parents finished high school, what’s going on in the family, domestic violence, and the fact that you’re poor, all of which can “shape your aspirations”.

“We do something about that in the Geelong model.”

“We want kids to stay on at school, or if they leave school, we want them to stay in education and get the equivalent of Year 12.”

He says the results are nothing short of “extraordinary”, but “it’s proved with official statistics, not contrived in any sort of soft measure”.

Homelessness, disadvantage needs a joint approach

Professor MacKenzie says the work of The Geelong Project is rightly a model worth pursuing, if only to tackle the twin issues of youth disadvantage and homelessness.

“One in four young people do not finish Year 12. Some of them recover their education but about 15 percent never do and may face lifelong disadvantage.”

To put these percentages in context, 41,000 young people experience homelessness and go to homelessness services in Australia each year.

He says what’s made the COSS model effective is “deep collaboration to change the local service system”.

“So, identifying problems early, responding in a different way, having a very strong commitment to outcomes – that’s very different from the existing service system. And if we’re honest, many of our existing programs are nowhere near working well enough.”

“There’s a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. And it takes a whole community effort to end youth homelessness and to make a difference around early school leaving. What I think the model has achieved is ... I believe an absolute first in this country or anywhere else.”

Collective decision-making and strong leadership crucial

Some of the key components of the COSS model have been a commitment to community development, strong leadership and vision, a clear governance model that enables shared decision-making, a “whole of population” screening process, and accepting that significant changes to processes, work practices and more can take time.

“I believe that people only come together if they have got some sort of niggling critique that things are not as good as they should be,” says Professor MacKenzie. “I think in just about every community I’ve ever gone to speak to or been involved in, there are such people.”

He says that the group must be “prepared to create a coalition of people with a stake in the problem and work through that process with a facilitatory form of leadership”.

Also essential is ensuring that collaborators “make decisions together”. In the case of The Geelong Project, that role fell to an “executive governance group”, which made all the key policy decisions. ►

Cutting back on competition

Geelong, as a small regional city, has seen “friction” between organisations competing for limited funds in the past, but Associate Professor MacKenzie says competition has been reduced by the collaborative forces at play.

“Now that we’ve got a ... community collective, that problem is less of a problem, because the collective says, ‘We’re going to go for this funding. Which is the appropriate organisation or subgroup to actually go for that particular funding?’”

“A lot of that competitiveness has been deflated by the fact that we’re much more a collective, acting for the whole of the community, but in different ways.”

He says organisations usually “co-operate at least as much as they compete”, but says this is particularly true in regional communities, which often have “a lot greater reason to work together”.

He has witnessed a trend here, saying, “The more collaborative you become, the stronger the collective becomes, and the less that competition ... seems to occur.”

Top lessons from The Geelong Project for would-be collaborators

Significant factors that have led to The Geelong Project’s success include good governance and decision-making models; a shared vision and goals; and strong leadership that facilitates co-operation rather than a top-down “transactional” style in which a dominant player directs all the activity, Professor MacKenzie says.

His report also spells out a series of key considerations and lessons for would-be collaborators, albeit focused on its COSS model. They include these:

Considerations

- Shared information
- Making joint decisions
- Regularly consulting and conferring
- Participating in cross-sectoral bodies for joint work

- Starting small, then growing a program
- Understanding the need for future development (of the program)
- The need to push for simpler funding models that support this style of collaborative work

Lessons

- Changing practices will be a crucial challenge
- Understanding a common vision shared by all participating stakeholders takes time
- Getting a common data system to work requires training and experience
- Building a community of service requires a realistic catchment
- Try to use local area services that are already well established
- Build community partnerships and a community consortium, not just a distinct single program or set of programs that changes little else systemically
- Training and development programs are critical, and may involve online training, professional training across sectors, a community of practice, and conferences to cement a sense of “collective impact”.

More information

Media reports: [ABC news](#) | [The Age](#)

[Report summary](#) | [YouTube clip](#) | [Download: The Geelong Project Interim Report in full \(PDF\)](#)

[WATCH: David MacKenzie reveals key findings from The Geelong Project.](#)

This article, [in extended form](#), was first published in Community Directors Intelligence, the member newsletter of the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA). ■



Collaboration a merger alternative: NFP lawyers

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY

Not-for-profit-law experts Moores say collaboration could be the answer for organisations reluctant to merge but still keen to reap the benefits of partnerships.

At a recent not-for-profit sector briefing delivered by Moores in Melbourne, principal Tony Rutherford explained that while mergers or acquisitions are “at the apex of what you can do with two or more organisations”, there are other options that not-for-profits can consider.

“There are options to dip your toe in ... there’s no reason that this can’t be done in a small way, as a starting point,” Mr Rutherford says.

“There are a range of contractual measures that allow organisations to collaborate without formally merging to get the benefit of combining the resources and knowledge of two or more organisations.” He also discussed non-contractual collaborations.

Moores’ latest examination of the options for organisations looking at ways to work together comes on the back of a previously published guide to mergers – **Thinking Big: To Merge or Not to Merge – That Is the Question** – co-produced by Our Community, Moores and Commonwealth Bank Not-for-profit Sector Banking.

Mr Rutherford said collaborative models included:

- Joint ventures
- Partnerships
- Co-locations
- Co-operatives
- Communities of practice
- Secondments

Here’s a little more information about several of those options.

Joint venture: Established by two or more organisations usually for a specific project. Under an unincorporated joint equity structure, the organisations remain as separate entities and the relationship (including management, liability and funding) is governed by a joint venture agreement. Each party has defined interests and is usually liable for its own debts, which it incurs individually.

A joint venture can also be set up as an incorporated entity. This could involve organisations injecting a small amount of equity into a new, jointly owned corporate entity. Being a company, the entity can enter into contracts or hold property, but it is also subject to the Corporations Act.

Partnership: Similar to a joint venture, except the parties have joint interests in the projects, and are jointly and separately liable for the expenses of the project.

Co-location: Two or more organisations agree to share common premises, resources (such as IT equipment and telephone services) and facilities. Co-location can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and referrals.

Co-operative: A legally recognised entity where members have equal status and voting rights (i.e. one member, one vote). Shareholders, managers and employees generally have no responsibility ►



for debts unless caused recklessly, negligently or fraudulently.

Start-up: As an alternative to the options above, your organisation might consider investing in a start-up, bringing across your organisation's skill, expertise and contacts.

How collaboration can mean more impact, more funds, lower costs

Delving into examples of organisations that have worked together to increase their impact, Mr Rutherford cited the Southern Grampians & Glenelg Primary Care Partnership, which shared knowledge between partner organisations to more broadly examine and tackle social issues in south-west Victoria.

Similarly, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America joined forces with Boys and Girls Clubs of America to link mentoring and development programs across the two organisations.

“That cross-pollination that you get from having people with different skill sets and different experiences, allowing you to do things in a different way, can be really beneficial to those organisations.”

Collaboration can also boost joint fundraising efforts, or access to funding, such as when eight of Australia's state-based spinal cord injury organisations created the Australian Spinal Injury Alliance. While each group remains independent, they can represent people with spinal cord injuries nationally.

“Sometimes, the government will prefer to work with combined organisations, whether that's a formal merged organisation, or whether it's on a joint venture or consortium basis,” Mr Rutherford says.

Not-for-profits can also reduce their capital expenses and ongoing costs by sharing back office functions such as IT, finance and payroll, or by sharing office space, including heating, lighting and fixed office equipment.

Mergers issue a battle of opinions

Mr Rutherford says arguments both for and against increased mergers continue to be heard



Moores Legal principal Tony Rutherford says not-for-profits have options apart from mergers, and they all revolve around collaboration.

in the sector. (Read Save the Children Australia CEO Paul Ronalds' take on page 17.)

One view is that there are “too many” not-for-profits, and that this creates confusion and wastes resources. Some point to a 2010 Productivity Commission report that suggested the sector “should be more open to the possibilities of restructuring for forging new ways of collaboration”.

The flipside is the argument that innovation is needed to fix entrenched problems. And that often requires the creative initiatives of smaller, more nimble not-for-profits, he says.

Collaborations can address the “too many NFPs” concerns to some extent, and also avoid the pitfalls of full-scale mergers and cultural clashes between organisations.

More information

More about mergers: [Thinking Big: To Merge or Not to Merge – That Is the Question](#)

Web resources: Legal help sheets and guides on the [ICDA](#) website

This article was first published (in extended form) in Community Directors Intelligence, the member newsletter of the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA). ICDA members can read the [extended version here](#) (log-in required). ■



Generating change with The Impact Assembly

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY



The Impact Assembly helped a collective impact effort dubbed “The Hive” in Sydney’s outer west to concentrate its energies.

Collaboration between community, not-for-profits, business, government and philanthropy is the only way we’ll solve our biggest problems, the chief of a social enterprise dedicated to joint effort says.

The Impact Assembly’s founder and director, Liz Cameron-Smith, is passionate about the enterprise’s mission, a child of the second biggest professional services firm in the world, PwC, late last year after several years of testing.

And the brainchild of an organisation with a pedigree of cracking problems for government and big business is now turning its attention to the toughest issues facing society, such as homelessness, suicide, chronic health issues,

youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, and Indigenous inequality.

The enterprise employs a PwC method dubbed “The Difference”, honed by techniques mastered by commercial consultants for use in high-powered boardrooms.

But instead of just corporate bigwigs, Ms Cameron-Smith and her team bring together groups that include not-for-profit leaders, philanthropists, workers, clients and people “at the heart of the issue” to “connect the dots” in a neutral setting to “create solutions”.

She says the ambitious agenda is a deliberate strategy, because many entrenched social issues aren’t going to be solved by “isolated action”. ►

“My question is: How else are you going to get change to happen?”

And she is firmly of the view that it is collaboration that will generate systemic change.

One major project has brought together mental health organisations across the country to tackle suicide.

Ms Cameron-Smith says several CEOs were already meeting in cafes in a bid to “align their efforts” when one of the organisations was referred to the relatively new service.

Already the project has expanded to include more organisations, which have agreed to an agenda that involves regular meetings, creating a “collaborative culture”, and setting some “high impact initiatives” in train to trial their work.

The Impact Assembly is also working with a group trying to forge a national approach to tackling of obesity, but it’s doing more than facilitating the group.

She says as well as working with The Impact Assembly, PwC has deployed consultant to analyse the obesity issue, including how much failing to act will cost us all.

“We know that the skill set we have around design and facilitation is one part of the way you can enable collective effort, but often they’ll need other skill sets as well, whether they are legal, economics, communications, IT.”

She says The Impact Assembly actively seeks out about half its clients in a bid to find the “messy” social issues, rather than wait for them to arrive on their doorstep, and the other half approach PwC directly for help.

A critical part of making these collaborations work is using different styles of joint effort between sectors, such as not-for-profits and business.

“We want to move beyond traditional models of corporate social responsibility, such as the ‘one day of volunteering a year’, and instead look at how we pool volunteering and package it up around particular projects that feed into more systemic change.”



Liz Cameron-Smith says organisations must collaborate if they’re serious about change.

She believes the old methods of a day of volunteering by big companies “are numbered”, largely because organisations realise “they’re not creating a lot of impact”.

“Most of them want to engage in a more meaningful way ... and on the flipside, big not-for-profit organisations have had enough of that sort of model, because it’s often more of a burden than an asset.”

Instead, she says, a more effective joint effort sees groups deploy the “strengths and assets of the corporate sector to support social change”.

She believes business and not-for-profits don’t have a choice but to cooperate on the big issues. Not-for-profits need help to achieve their missions, while the corporate world will continue to lose the public’s trust unless they’ve got an authentic commitment to good.

And that cross-pollination must spread further to have the biggest effect, she says.

“The majority of the groups we work with are working across community, business, government, not-for-profit and philanthropy.

“This really has the chance to drive completely new ways of working, because you’re combining the strengths from different sectors to come up with much more innovative ways of thinking about tackling a problem.” ►



The Hive has demonstrated the success of the collective impact approach to social intervention.

She gives as a theoretical example a not-for-profit seeking a corporate partnership to tackle homelessness.

“If that corporate was to send a few people to volunteer in a soup kitchen, that’s only going to have so much impact. But instead imagine it’s a bank. Think about the data that a bank has access to, and the way they can predict when someone might be at risk of falling into a housing crisis.

“Imagine how powerful that data set could be to enable a not-for-profit to figure out at what point to provide support to people who are at risk.”

She says a solution might mean pressing the bank to shift its policy away from “pushing someone over the brink and into ... homelessness” and towards offering products that could help those at risk.

“We have to find ways of business to contribute in a more meaningful way,” Ms Cameron-Smith says.

These kinds of models require organisations to adopt methods such as a “systems thinking mindset” and models such as “Collective Impact”, which was developed in the United States and has had some take-up in Australia.

Ms Cameron-Smith says PwC helped with one project known as The Hive, a collective impact effort by Uniting Way, the NSW Government and the Ten20 Foundation, in Mt Druitt, in Sydney’s outer west.

PwC’s role was to host a two-day event “that helped them build the case for change”, partly by finding common ground among a large number of people with “diverse views and different agendas”. PwC continued to work with the group for another 18 months to refine their vision and strategies.

“We know that collaboration is hard, and to make it work effectively, it is important to have that collaborative infrastructure, because usually it’s not anyone’s day job.”

“We make it our job to think about how you engage people, how you navigate those complex dynamics and move from talk to action.”

More information

More about the PwC method

WATCH NOW: [How The Impact Assembly works](#)

This article was first published in Community Directors Intelligence, the member newsletter of the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA). ■



The world in aphorisms: collaboration

BY CHRIS BORTHWICK, THINKER IN RESIDENCE, OUR COMMUNITY

1. Too many cooks make light work or
Many hands spoil the broth.
Take your pick.
2. He travels fastest that travels alone
Because nobody's following him.
3. Co-operation means coordination means
communication
*And does **not** necessarily mean a committee.*
4. "Only strength can co-operate. Weakness can
only beg."
Dwight D. Eisenhower
5. People like people who people like.
Friends breed friends. Partners breed donors.
6. If you dance with a gorilla, the gorilla leads.
Some partners are more equal than others.
7. Money changes everything.
If there's funding to divide, get it in writing.
8. In the bacon and eggs partnership, the hen
is contributing from surplus; the pig is cutting
into core competencies.
If you can, try to be the chicken. ■

Collaboration: they said it



Daniel Stubbs, Inner Melbourne Legal Centre

How can collaborations go wrong?

Making assumptions about what each can and should do. And not understanding the limits of the other party's capacity. For example, often it's easy to assume that large corporate law firms have significant resources to bring to a collaboration. The truth is that they have a significant work load with paying clients and we need to fit within that. If we show that level of understanding that will help bring partners like this on board.

How do you share the load fairly?

It's crucial to be clear up front about what both parties are best placed to do and how much. And along the way we need to

provide feedback about how the division of labour is working.

How do you collaborate without losing all your hair?

By maintaining open communication channels so issues can be raised easily.

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

The test is whether it provides significant benefit for vulnerable clients that we would not have been able to deliver without the collaboration. If in fact the collaboration takes more resources than the capacity it adds then we need to question it.



Liz Cameron-Smith, PwC's The Impact Assembly

How can collaborations go wrong?

They go wrong if it's not the right approach to take. I don't think collaboration is the answer to everything. But if you are taking a collaborative approach, it can fall over if there isn't shared leadership and commitment to following through.

It is hard, and there will be ups and downs. If you're not prepared to stay the course, and continually learn and pivot as you go, it's going to be a really frustrating experience, and eventually it will run out of steam. It's often nobody's day job to keep it going.

How do you share the load fairly?

A big part of it is about setting up a different mindset, so that it's not actually about who takes the credit, and "who owns this?" It's about how shared ownership, and therefore shared credit. Inevitably you will have certain organisations playing a stronger role than others, but that should be designed

based on who's the right group to play which part. If you've co-designed the way that works, you get a lot less of that attitude, because you've all been part of shaping the approach.

How do you collaborate without losing all your hair?

We know it's hard. And that's why it's important to have that collaborative "infrastructure" at the core. It can be hard to keep momentum going, which is why having a neutral group like us at the core helps takes some of the difficulty out of collaboration. We make it our job to think about how to navigate some of those complex dynamics, and move things from talk to action.

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

Where it is an issue that's not going to be solved by isolated action, my question is, "How else are you going to get change to happen?"





Denis Moriarty, group managing director, Our Community

How do you share the load fairly?

With open arms, honesty and respect for each other's "cultural" differences.

How do you collaborate without losing all your hair?

Keep reminding yourself that you are not the Messiah, tomorrow is another day

and things take time – a lot longer that you initially planned .

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

Because they can work brilliantly – some are glorious happy marriages. Some are toxic. If you are honest about making them work, it's worth bothering.



Tony Rutherford, principal, Moores Legal

How do you share the load fairly?

Usually that will that will be dictated by the documents. The agreement will dictate what each party is required to do. There are dispute resolution mechanisms in those agreements that the parties can take advantage of, to the extent that one party is not pulling their weight.

How can organisations do this without losing their hair?

Get proper advice and do the work early on. A lot of effort needs to

go into understanding their own organisation, and what their strengths and weaknesses are, their values and their purpose. Also putting a lot of effort into meeting on a regular basis with the organisation they're looking to partner with. And working out what their values and purposes are and making sure their purposes are aligned. Obviously if you going to be working together, that's really important.



Jocelyn Bignold, CEO, McAuley Community Services for Women

How can collaborations go wrong?

When you don't spend time building the relationship; you need to have a bit of trust established and then it's easier to address issues of potential or real conflict early. And when you are not clear on the expectations of each party; miscommunication can escalate into a difficult situation easily and quickly (especially when it's not in person). Finally, fear of clear communication, i.e. being able to have a conversation that you might feel uncomfortable about. The solution is to stick to the issue and remove the emotion.

How do you share the load fairly?

It's not always clear cut, but usually by negotiation and working to your

strengths and areas of expertise (what is it that each party is bringing to the collaboration).

How do you collaborate without losing your hair?

All of the above AND it is important to have a values alignment. If you are coming from a different philosophical position, maybe it's time to cut your losses and get out while you still have hair.

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

Because they can be fun, and because you know, or have reason to believe, the collaboration is going to produce better results than if you were doing it alone.



David MacKenzie, Associate Professor, Swinburne University and partner in the Geelong Project

How can collaborations go wrong?

If people pursue their narrow organisational self interest, at the expense of the collaboration and the collective, and start to compete in a very disorganised way, that can ruin trust and disassemble what's come together.

How do you share the load fairly?

By having collective decision-making practices. By having policies. By starting to construct new sorts of institutional forms. They may not be legal entities in the sense that a community agency is a legal company, but if you want to work collaboratively, then you've actually got to create new processes and new organisational structures to make that work. And, you've got to give up something to participate, and get the benefits of collaboration.

How do you collaborate without losing your hair?

Actually I did lose all my hair over the past 10 years! I joke that it's The Geelong Project's fault, but I actually think it's probably hereditary.

Seriously though, collaboration is a process with problems and you've got to be prepared to be a problem solver. You've got to be prepared – as a group – to develop a culture of frank discussion and debate and criticism. That's less common than you might think in the community sector, unfortunately. People are often habituated into being their own PR machines, but I think we've achieved a critical culture into Geelong, and that's been very helpful.

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

If we want to make a difference, if we want to overcome disadvantage, if we want all Australians to share in the prosperity of this country, then we've got to do some of these things. We don't accept that there's a significant proportion of the community that are poor; that there are children who don't have the advantages that other children have. There's a whole raft of things we can do about it, but what we've done in the Geelong project is something practical that has made a difference.



Elizabeth Crowther, CEO, Wellways

How can collaborations go wrong?

When people enter into them for conflicting purposes. Be clear why you want to enter into a collaboration and do it for the right reasons. You can spend a whole lot of time meeting and navel gazing and not actually progressing what you what you need to do."

How do you share the load fairly?

Everybody works hard!

How do you collaborate without losing your hair?

You have to want to collaborate to be successful. And you have to know what it is that you're aiming for. For my sins, I happened to be chair of a number of peaks. Why? Multiple voices are just noise. Single strategic voices actually can have some impact over time.

Collaborations are hard work. Why bother?

Justice is a major driver for me. No one organisation can do it all, and they shouldn't.



The case for increased collaboration

BY PAUL RONALDS, CEO, SAVE THE CHILDREN

Australia's not-for-profit sector makes immensely important and valuable contributions to the community, but the environment is tough – there's no argument about that.

And the pressure to perform is intense.

We know that if we are to make progress in addressing complex disadvantage, clients need services that are joined up, that talk to each other. But in the social sector, our most vulnerable clients face a dauntingly fragmented system.

Rather than promoting collaboration, the current system sees thousands of community organisations working independently – often at odds with each other – to find solutions to major social problems. As John Kania and Mark Kramer **wrote** in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in 2011, the system is “oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization”, and with thousands of organisations working on the same problems, the “perceived resources required to make meaningful progress” are increased “exponentially”. This raises questions about expenditure and return on investment.

The system isn't working for organisations or clients, and it isn't working for donors either.

Donors are grumpy, and the only constant is change

There are over 600,000 not-for-profit organisations in Australia, including more than 56,000 charities. Each business day, 10 new charities are created – and many more not-for-profits.

Choice is good. But as these multiplying organisations promote themselves, the



Paul Ronalds says de-fragmenting the social sector is one of the keys to making progress in addressing complex disadvantage.

cacophony of noise is deafening. And it's making donors grumpy.

In September 2016, the consumer group Choice released research showing a quarter of Australians receive phone calls from charities at least once a week, and 90% of recipients find them annoying. Older Australians are often a target.

The UK provides a glimpse of where this trend could take the sector if we don't think of alternative methods. When 92-year-old Olive Cooke committed suicide in 2015, the number of fundraising letters she received was identified as one of the reasons for her distress. This shone a light on the sector's fundraising practices and led to the introduction of new charity laws. These included new government powers to issue official warnings, disqualify directors, and intervene in the regulation of fundraising.

In Australia, concerns about the practices of face-to-face fundraisers (“chuggers” or “charity muggers”, as they are sometimes called) have also made headlines. ►

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) released an independent **report** on commission-based fundraising in the charity sector late last year, and remains focused on this area. And the office of the Fair Work Ombudsman is **looking into** how charities use labour to solicit donations.

In all likelihood, both ACCC investigations and the Fair Work Ombudsman's report will identify unsatisfactory behaviour in the sector. Even if poor practice is limited to an unscrupulous few, further dents to public trust in charities are almost inevitable.

Independent of these reports, the first review of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act (ACNC Act) is currently underway. The review is likely to result in changes to reporting requirements, including new reporting metrics, and disclosures about government funding received, fundraising costs, and director and executive remuneration.

Adding to the changes in this shifting legislative environment, the Federal Government's proposed Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Bill 2017 could also introduce a whole swathe of new regulation to the sector.

There is no doubt the regulatory storm clouds are building.

In this environment, just balancing the books, responding to increasing stakeholder expectations and adhering to new regulations is challenging. Fulfilling a complex mission on top of it all can be overwhelming. Many in our sector are burning out.

Doing more with less

Despite the growth in the number of charities, funding for them has been relatively flat over the past decade. But investment in fundraising efforts has increased.

This potent mix – more charities, flat giving and an increased fundraising spend – has led to an **alarming decline** in fundraising efficiency.

It's a decline that is likely to make grumpy donors even grumpier.

Government funding has helped the top line of charities grow, but with more for-profit organisations chasing contracts, this funding source is also increasingly competitive. Larger grants are being shared among fewer recipients and government is seeking to realise the benefits of economies of scale.

As a result, charities are expected to do more with less. The margin on government work is often very thin, with increasing expectations regarding reporting and risk management all adding to costs.

These trends raise deep concerns about the sector's sustainability – at the very time it should be investing more in innovation, and taking advantage of new technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Faced with such a bleak picture, how should not-for-profit boards and management teams respond?

Organisations need to rethink their operating model from top to bottom, and this must include looking for opportunities for increased collaboration. Partnerships can help organisations bridge the gap between strategic intent and capability.

There's "collaboration" and then there's collaboration

The not-for-profit sector spends a lot of time talking about "partnerships", "co-operation" and "collaboration". But in my experience, talk is more prevalent than practice.

At one level, it's not surprising. Sector leaders ►

“FULFILLING A COMPLEX MISSION ON TOP OF IT ALL CAN BE OVERWHELMING. MANY IN OUR SECTOR ARE BURNING OUT.”

are pulled in a thousand directions, and true collaboration requires a concentrated investment of time and effort.

That investment should start with a genuine assessment of organisational activities – assessing which ones are critical to achieving the mission. Several questions – and answers – should guide this assessment. In which activities does your organisation have unique capability? Are some activities more effectively done by others? Do some activities benefit from economies of scale?

Categorising activities in this way will start to clarify your “collaboration value proposition”, or the activities where collaboration will generate the greatest return.

The next step is to think through the *type* of collaboration that will best enable you to realise the benefits. Types of collaboration include informal collaboration (information sharing, for example); joint tendering, which may be governed by a simple memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement; and more long-term arrangements such as formal joint-venture sponsorship, back-office outsourcing, and mergers.

At Save the Children, we use all these forms of collaboration to increase our impact.

For example, we have used memorandums of understanding to establish new ventures, such as the Humanitarian Leadership Programme with Deakin University and the First 1000 Days Australia childhood development initiative with the University of Melbourne.

These ventures combine the best of great academic organisations with our on-the-ground experience as an agency implementing programs.

We also co-locate with other not-for-profits – such as Oaktree and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation – to create a “cluster effect” This grouping of charities increases the opportunity to share resources, especially back-office resources.

Recently, in a sector first, we participated with other aid agencies in a joint humanitarian appeal in response to the Rohingya crisis. This coordinated approach significantly increased public awareness and raised nearly \$5 million.

In Kununurra, Western Australia, we support five Aboriginal-controlled early childhood service providers across the East Kimberly. Save the Children manages the single contract with the Department of Social Services and is responsible for reporting back to the government, but services are delivered by each of the organisations to their local community.

These collaborations have a powerful effect on the competitiveness and performance of each organisation.

We are also looking for opportunities to support the growth of other not-for-profits through mergers.

Late last year, Save the Children announced a merger with the child abuse prevention organisation Child Wise, our third merger. This followed mergers with Hands on Learning Australia and Good Beginnings Australia. ►

“TALK IS MORE PREVALENT THAN PRACTICE. SECTOR LEADERS ARE PULLED IN A THOUSAND DIRECTIONS, AND TRUE COLLABORATION REQUIRES A CONCENTRATED INVESTMENT OF TIME AND EFFORT.”

As in the private sector, mergers in the not-for-profit sector happen for a range of reasons.

In the case of Good Beginnings Australia, a merger offered both organisations the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of services in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities.

Likewise, our merger with Hands on Learning Australia allowed us to take a highly effective program helping disengaged kids to stay in school longer to the next level. In the 12 months since we merged, the Hands on Learning program has grown by 20%.

Our recent merger with Child Wise offers the opportunity to significantly improve child safeguarding across our community. Using Save the Children's geographical footprint, Child Wise can extend its training and consultancy services into the Pacific where abuse and violence against children are endemic.

Mergers are not about big charities getting bigger. Mergers are about organisations with similar missions and goals achieving those goals more effectively by using the same infrastructure.

What this means for Save the Children, in practical terms, is achieving a bigger impact for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children – both at home and abroad.

Mergers allow us get the most out of the best that each organisation has to offer. We believe this “best of both worlds” approach is an opportunity many other charities should be considering.

Collaboration also means looking outside the sector

The examples so far highlight collaboration between not-for-profit organisations. But true collaboration should not be restricted to the community sector.

We know that to make progress on the most difficult social problems, a cross-sector approach is necessary. Real progress on complex social problems requires collaboration with government and the private sector.

Collaboration with the private sector

There are many ways for not-for-profit organisations to work with the private sector.

Corporate philanthropy is an important, and still growing, element of many relationships.

Estimates from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest corporate donations rose from \$635 million in 2007 to \$863 million in 2013. Corporate sponsorships also grew – albeit more slowly – from \$1.1 billion in 2007 to \$1.4 billion in 2013.

Skilled volunteering also continues to grow.

But the way leading companies engage with non-government organisations is becoming far more sophisticated.

Corporations recognise that many non-government organisations are now substantial entities in their own right – with considerable economic and technical resources.

Similarly, leading non-government organisations recognise that harnessing the resources and skills of corporate companies is key to solving many difficult social challenges.

A great example of this is Save the Children's work with pharmaceutical company Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK). Our partnership is ambitious, and goes well beyond the traditional charity–corporate fundraising model.

The partnership touches almost all areas of GSK's business, using expertise in research and development, immunisation, and supply chain logistics to help save children's lives.

In 2015, globally, 5.9 million children under the age of five died – the majority from preventable causes. This alarming statistic motivated GSK and Save the Children to partner, and work together, to find new ways to help reduce child mortality.

One of the highlights has been the development of chlorhexidine (CHX) – an antiseptic commonly used in mouthwash – into a gel to help prevent infections in newborn babies. Combining Save the Children's expertise in reaching some of the most vulnerable children with GSK's capabilities ►

in research and development, together we have come up with an innovative way to help those who need it most.

And to create meaningful impact.

To date, through this partnership, over 21,000 newborns have been reached with the CHX gel.

Another example of a successful corporate partnership is our work with Mastercard and the World Food Programme in Lebanon and Jordan.

Rather than relying on the physical distribution of food or paper-based vouchers, Syrian refugees can now purchase food using Mastercard's electronic cards in participating shops. This technology is far more efficient, supports local shopkeepers, and increases choice for refugees.

I see some key trends in the relationship between the private sector and not-for-profit organisations.

For most significant corporations, working with the community and the social sector is increasingly seen as part of "core business" and a key ingredient of medium-term performance.

Investing in social outcomes:

- Maintains "social licence to operate"
- Supports the value of a company's intangible assets
- Mitigates several risks, therefore maximising risk-adjusted returns.

Traditional philanthropy is also growing, and we are seeing corporate leaders in the new economy making bigger contributions.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, launched in 2000, is the largest private foundation in the world (it currently has an endowment of more than US\$40 billion).

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan have announced they will give away 99% of their wealth. While Facebook shares have taken a battering lately, the couple's net worth is still in excess of US\$70 billion.

That's more than 20 times Australia's current foreign aid budget.

“WE ARE SEEING CORPORATE PARTNERS FOCUSING ON LONGER-TERM, DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS.”

While gifts of this scale are less common from Australia's most wealthy, the Paul Ramsay Foundation has a corpus of \$3 billion, generated by a bequest from businessman Paul Ramsay, who died in 2014.

These new philanthropists are behaving like investors. This means taking a disciplined approach and allocating their money to make the greatest possible difference to society's problems – in other words, to maximise their "social return".

This new approach has implications for both not-for-profits and companies.

For not-for-profits, it means developing a more robust evidence base than they might have had in the past.

For CEOs and company directors, the purpose of making donations is undermined if they treat a corporate foundation as a slush fund – supporting a "pet" cause, enhancing an individual's status in the community, or cementing a business relationship.

We are also seeing corporate partners reducing the number of not-for-profit partners and focusing on longer-term, deeper relationships. For the corporates with the best social engagement strategies, this means:

- Less focus on giving funds to many disparate causes
- Greater investment in vetting potential not-for-profit partners
- Greater emphasis on undertaking a small number of social initiatives that also meet corporate strategic goals. ►

Beyond corporate philanthropy, there is a growing opportunity for companies to achieve “shared value”. That is, to implement policies and practices that enhance their competitiveness while also improving social and environmental conditions in the regions in which they operate.

Save the Children’s most sophisticated and long-term relationships seek to achieve shared value because we know that over the long term, this is the best way to align interests.

These types of arrangements emerge as relationships mature. They are normally part of a broad-based relationship that includes skilled volunteering and corporate philanthropy.

Collaboration with government

I recently spoke at a private sector forum on shared value, and many of the attendees implied, in one way or another, that we would make better progress on complex policy problems if only government would “get out of the way”.

Nonsense upon stilts, as the 16th-century English philosopher Jeremy Bentham once said.

The United States has the largest and most robust community sector in the world, and more head offices of global firms than any other country. Yet it ranks at the bottom of the OECD for solving social problems. We might be attracted to the idea of unleashing the potential of the private sector and local communities through empowering civil society, but we should not forget that government policies are still the main driver of wellbeing in our society.

We need government to be *actively* involved

in solving complex social problems – not just passive funders of community-based organisations.

This means we need strong collaboration between the community and government sectors. There are some examples of good practice, but too often the relationship is transactional and far more likely to be characterised as purchaser–supplier rather than as a genuine partnership.

This article is not the place for a full exploration of the relationship between the community sector and government. Suffice to say, we desperately need to change our current approach.

We need governments who understand the capability of the not-for-profit sector and the potential of a genuinely collaborative approach in making progress on some of our most difficult problems.

But we also need a not-for-profit sector that is far more politically savvy – that understands the constraints of our political system, and is prepared to be far more accountable for achieving outcomes.

True collaboration in all its forms is hard work. It requires dedicated investment of time and other resources by community sector leaders. But the alternative is more of the same – and we know this will not create meaningful impact. Nor will it result in the sustainable community sector that our society desperately needs.

Follow Paul Ronalds on Twitter: [@PaulDRonalds](https://twitter.com/PaulDRonalds) ■

“GOVERNMENT POLICIES ARE STILL THE MAIN DRIVER OF WELLBEING IN OUR SOCIETY. WE NEED GOVERNMENT TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SOLVING COMPLEX SOCIAL PROBLEMS – NOT JUST PASSIVE FUNDERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS.”

Your two-minute NFP news digest

Tech troubles for disability service providers

“Having good information systems to enable service delivery and outcome measurement is still a challenge for many. This year’s survey shows that having an IT plan for the future is the first step in making sustained improvements.” – David Spriggs, CEO, Infoxchange

The report *Digital Technology in the Not-for-profit Sector* shows that community groups in Australia and New Zealand are struggling to provide services to clients effectively. Disability service providers in particular are facing problems, with more than half saying their IT systems are inadequate.

[Read the report](#)



Gary Johns I: Waking the giant

“In some ways the charity sector is a sleeping giant. With data, gathered by law, I aim to wake it and let it produce more charitable works.” – Gary Johns

The ACNC commissioner tells the CPA Australia NFP conference that he intends to “place as much data as possible into the hands of donors so that they can help drive the sector to greater efficiency and effectiveness.”

[Read the speech](#)

Gary Johns II: Donors need charity data

“Donors trust charities to do what they promised. But there is a considerable difference between a single charity and its relationship with its donors and 55,000 charities and their relationships with their donors and potential donors.” – Gary Johns

The ACNC commissioner says information collected through charities’ Annual Information Statements should and will be better presented on the ACNC website to help donors inform themselves about charities. “A donor may be satisfied that their charity does what it said it promised, but what if another could do better?” he said at the CPA Australia NFP conference in March. “What if many charities compete in one field, but few in others?” **[Read more of the speech](#)**



Prepare for disaster

“We know that when communities are better prepared for disasters, they recover faster and more effectively than those that are not. So, we are using the latest research into how communities can build their resilience to inform these community-led, place-based pilots.” – Natalie Egleton, CEO, Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR)

Three NSW towns and semi-rural areas will be the first to trial a new national framework to improve the ability of communities to prepare for and recover from disasters. Ocean Shores, Wee Waa and North Richmond will test the approach outlined in last year’s report *Disaster Resilient, Future Ready*.

[Read the report](#)

Journalism turns to philanthropy for its future

“On best estimates, around 3,000 journalism jobs have been lost in Australia over the past five years. We need to get bigger but in the current climate that’s an often exhausting swim against the tide.” – Lenore Taylor, editor, *Guardian Australia*

In the face of shrinking ad revenue, *Guardian Australia* has turned to philanthropy to ensure its reporting can continue. As well as accepting donations from readers, the media organisation has secured philanthropic funding to report on subjects deemed important by the funders, such as Indigenous issues and political accountability.

[Read more](#)

Donations against hate

“Hate is just repackaged fear, and if you tear away the layers of a hateful person, you’ll usually find a scared little kid in there.” – Frank Meeink, co-founder, Life After Hate

[Life After Hate](#), a Chicago-based not-for-profit that helps radicalised individuals to leave extremist groups, has come up with a novel way to reduce the spread of hate online. In partnership with software company Spredfast, it’s created **[#WeCounterHate](#)** to reduce the number of hateful tweets on Twitter. By triggering a donation to Life After Hate every time a hateful tweet is retweeted, the group has reduced hateful retweets by more than 50%. **[Read more](#)**

Researchers call for register of mergers

“The current lack of any public register of [mergers and acquisitions] tends to cloud any systematic and comprehensive view on the changing trends and impacts of M&As within the Australian NFP sector.”

New research from RMIT University and CPA Australia has found that a lack of transparency and data makes it difficult for not-for-profits to gain a clear view of the likely effects of mergers in the sector. *Mergers, Amalgamations & Acquisitions in the Australian Not-For-profit Human Services Sector* says NFPs need to be able to assess other options, such as resource sharing alliances

[Read the report](#)



The newest link in the blockchain

“Ultimately, we need to devise new standards and best practices so that we can better infuse the human factor into new technology solutions that hold tremendous potential to address social and environmental issues. Fortunately, the building blocks are already there.”

– David Lehr & Paul Lamb

Behind the crypto-currency chatter and bitcoin hype lies a vital digital tool that has plenty of applications in the social sector, according to consultants Lehr and Lamb. Writing in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, they explain how Blockchain is already being used to manage the legal identity of refugees, to secure land ownership rights, to support local elections, and to track so-called blood diamonds, gems mined in war zones and sold to fund the actions of warlords. [Read more](#)

Funders urged to put dollars into advocacy

“If we are to have an impact and strive towards more and better philanthropy, it means using all the tools in our philanthropy toolbox. One of those tools is funding policy advocacy.” – Krystian Seibert, advocacy & insight manager, Philanthropy Australia

Philanthropists must be prepared to take “calculated risks” if the sector is to successfully confront the “difficult and wicked social and environmental challenges” that Australia faces, according to a new report from Philanthropy Australia. *The Power of Advocacy* says philanthropists must be prepared to fund charities to do advocacy work to bring about systemic change.

[Read the report](#)

Oz NGOs lag behind Americans in tech use

“Excellent online practices – from thoughtful web design to active social media stewardship – are now fundamental basics for successful donor engagement.” – Ashley Thompson, managing director, Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact

Only 70% of NGOs in Australia and Oceania accept online donations via their website, according to a new global survey of tech used by not-for-profits. This compares to 86% in North America (the highest number globally) and 55–56% in Africa and Asia (the lowest). Nonprofit Tech for Good’s 2018 *Global NGO Technology Report* drew on survey results from 5,352 NGOs worldwide. [Read the report](#) ■

Astrophysicist turns her mind to the grants universe

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY



Astrophysicist Dr Paola Oliva-Altamirano is on a mission to understand the impact of nearly 300,000 grant applications.

Galaxy formation? That's nothing. Try understanding the impact of grants.

Dr Paola Oliva-Altamirano, an astrophysicist, astronomer, and specialist in the creation of galaxies over billions of years, has turned her attention to something harder – data science for the social sector.

Just days after her appointment to Our Community's Melbourne-based **Innovation Lab**, Dr Oliva-Altamirano's name was put forward for a tricky new mission: to decipher the impact of nearly 300,000 grant applications.

Only eight data scientists would be selected for the prestigious six-month **Uptake.Org Data**

Fellows program in Chicago, an all-expenses-paid exploration of some of the toughest data quests in the social sector.

Uptake, a technology pioneer that rocketed from start-up to US\$2 billion firm, is working with data leaders in not-for-profits and similar organisations through **Uptake.Org** – its philanthropic and civic innovation arm – to help workers to hone “hard skills in data science”. The company provides invaluable coaching and connections for those fellows.

Dr Oliva-Altamirano's proposal, which was one of 130 applications from data scientists across the globe, came in two parts:

- To use machine learning methods to create ►

an algorithm to interrogate Our Community's SmartyGrants database

- To create an easy user experience that would categorise grants during applications.

The Innovation Lab's proposal rose above the pack, partly as a result of Dr Oliva-Altamirano's experience as a dedicated number cruncher, coder and problem solver.

The lab's need to deal with a huge stack of data, and the potential benefits for the sector in extending Our Community's CLASSIE taxonomy (the Classification System for Australian Social Sector Initiatives and Entities), also helped convince Uptake to support the lab's plan.

Our Community's project will be the only Australian one on Uptake's books. While the fellowship covers the costs of flights to the US, accommodation and more, the value of the input of three expert consultants who will help the plan come to life is much harder to quantify.

Dr Oliva-Altamirano says while her move from the vast gulf of space to the tricky field of grants management might seem unusual, her background in physics, computing, coding and problem solving required the same tools used in social data science.

"In the end, galaxies are a series of dots out there in space ... a series of numbers. So too, grants are all about the numbers, and of course modelling.

"My thesis was looking into how a galaxy grows through certain characteristics – age, mass, the metals present ... These are all numbers that create a pattern that you can use to predict.

"You can also apply similar methods to 'people data' and use patterns to predict and test your model."

Dr Oliva-Altamirano says she has already learnt a great deal from a trio of highly qualified

mentors based in the Uptake labs, including its top data scientist, Jay Qi; a software engineer specialising in handling big databases, Birchard Hayes; and social data academic and algorithm expert Momin Malik.

These experts selected her project, she was pleased to find out, because they thought they could help and learn at the same time.

And she says everyone's expectations are quite open.

"What they really want from us is that we learn something totally new."

But Uptake also expects the work should help Our Community to increase the power of its social impact, and to improve its ability to develop these kinds of projects.

Dr Oliva-Altamirano says the social sector lags technologically behind other sectors in the US, in much the same way it does here.

But her mentors and fellows have helped her realise what can be achieved by community organisations equipped with the latest data models, methods and computing software.

She hopes the fellowship will lead to a product that can be used by anyone in the grants sector.

Her study will also delve into algorithmic "bias", where data has been skewed by wrong assumptions, such as gender bias, she says.

Dr Oliva-Altamirano expects her latest mission to be much tougher than trying to unravel the secrets of the universe.

"With galaxies you can be plus or minus a billion years in your calculations. You certainly can't afford making anything like those errors with this data."

More information

About the Innovation Lab and CLASSIE. ■



Data scientist Joost van der Linden

The dangers of data on autopilot: a “biased” view

BY JOOST VAN DER LINDEN, INNOVATION LAB DATA SCIENTIST, WITH MATTHEW SCHULZ

At Our Community – the home of SmartyGrants, Funding Centre, and the Australian Institute of Grants Management – we do a lot of thinking about the future of grants and grantmaking.

We know that with an estimated \$57 billion in grants distributed annually to charities in Australia alone, there’s a lot at stake, for grantmakers, grantseekers, governments and philanthropists.

It’s why our data initiatives enterprise – the Innovation Lab – has been exploring whether automatic grant assessments are good or bad for the sector.

We’ve just produced a white paper that helps explain how it could work. So, what role should automatic assessment methods or algorithms play?

The answer? It’s complicated. And it’s all to do with bias.

We’ve seen some profound progress in algorithms to **assess compounds for new viable drugs, identify suicide risk to aid crisis counsellors, diagnose heart disease and lung cancer, and much more.**

You may already have been profiled by intelligent systems for your application for a home loan, a credit card, insurance or even a job interview. ►

However, these algorithms are **not without risk**. And a wrong diagnosis, unfair assessment or false result can have huge implications.

Consider the **Chinese “social credit system”**, in which authorities are using a secret set of algorithms to score the country’s 1.4 billion residents, giving awards for those who are deemed trustworthy based on benevolent acts, such as donating blood or volunteering.

Authorities have reportedly banned more than 7 million people from taking flights, on the basis they’re “untrustworthy”. Others can’t book hotels, buy homes, take holidays or send their kids to private schools.

On the other hand, the disobedient are punished for dodging fines, cheating in video games or failing to show up for restaurant bookings.

But there have been many cases in which citizens say they’ve been wrongly punished, which suggests errors and potential bias in the algorithms, whether deliberate or not.

While these are extreme cases, the same principle of risk applies to the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence in grants assessments.

Suppose you’re wanting an algorithm that automatically shortlists the most promising grant applications from the thousands you’ve received.

The potential benefits are enormous: the time saving, the consistency, and improved data about those programs.

But there are a couple of big issues you must contend with.

First, your algorithm is unlikely to be perfect.

Second, the real-world data your algorithm is based on is itself likely to be biased.

Under these circumstances, it has recently

been shown mathematically that algorithmic bias is an inherent trade-off between several definitions of fairness.

This “machine bias” has been claimed to increase the chance **of African Americans being wrongly labelled as “high risk” criminal reoffenders** in a system adopted by the US justice system.

But significantly, the private firm contracted to provide the service has refused to reveal its algorithm, and instead observers have only the final assessment score to work with.

This example, and others we’ve raised in this article, should serve as a warning to developers to remain alert to the risks.

Some degree of unfairness is unavoidable, which highlights how important it is to make the algorithm transparent to those affected, and to mitigate biases where possible.

That’s why we’d advise anyone considering a foray into the brave new world of grantmaking powered by artificial intelligence to consider:

- How fair is your algorithm?
- What measures are you going to take to avoid missing out on good applications?
- How will you explain your **algorithmic decision** to grantmakers and applicants?

It is ultimately up to algorithm developers – alongside grantmakers and grantseekers – to decide how to make the tradeoffs that are required to use such systems, and to explain those decisions to those who are affected.

More information

For a more detailed examination, read our **Innovation Lab white paper**. ■

Roll up your sleeves, folks, and help with our grants survey

Since we kicked off this year's **Grants in Australia** survey, hundreds of not-for-profit representatives have filled it out, and we've had some fantastic responses.

We're pleased to reveal that the winner of February early-bird prize is Chuck Berger, manager of Kimberley Community Legal Services (KCLS), which provides free legal, financial and counselling to disadvantaged people in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Here's what he had to say about grantmakers:

"Just as everybody wants to save the world but nobody wants to help do the washing up, grantmakers are too focused on innovation and pilot projects.

"Something doesn't have to be innovative to be worthy, and few pilots ever get scaled up.

"It would be nice if your \$10,000 seed funding led to a cure for cancer through a TED-worthy crowd-sourced citizen-science capacity-building pilot, but in the real world, money for a plain old mental health counsellor, teacher or community lawyer is a better bet."

Well put! Chuck wins:

- a **\$150 book bundle** for KCLS
- a year's membership of the Institute of Community Directors Australia (**ICDA**), worth \$65



Grants in Australia survey respondent Chuck Berger says grantmakers are too focused on innovation and pilot projects.

- a year's subscription to the **Funding Centre**, including grants database access, worth \$85.

For your chance to win the April early-bird prize, all you need to do is fill out the survey by April 30.

We'll be looking for the most creative, insightful, original, succinct and useful compliment or criticism that captures the mood of the sector.

And don't forget, the best answer to our selected question from all entries will take home a 64GB 10.5" Apple iPad Pro (RRP \$979). The survey closes May 7.

ENTER NOW ■



VIDEO: Community Directors Council chair Susan Pascoe (left) and business leader Carol Schwartz in conversation

Our Community hails the next generation of female leaders

At the announcement last month of the winners of 94 scholarships for women to study the Diploma of Business (Governance), we recorded two of Australia's most eminent business and community figures in conversation about some of the big issues facing Australia's female leaders.

The chair of Our Community, Carol Schwartz, spoke with the new chair of the Community Directors Council, Susan Pascoe, about the challenges faced by women at the top of

organisations, and how women's involvement in decision-making is crucial – whether it's volunteer involvement at the local lost dogs' home, or steering organisations that steward millions in funding.

Appropriately, the event was held against a backdrop of striking feminist artworks on show as part of **"Unfinished Business"** at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts in Melbourne.

WATCH NOW: Click here to hear what they had to say. ■



Who are the people in your neighbourhood?

Community spirit is brewing in the backyards of Kensington, Melbourne, writes Alex McMillan, and the neighbourhood is growing together and giving back.

Like many people involved in the community sector, Kensington musician Tim Solly found himself drawn to the idea of connecting with those around him.

“Twelve weeks after my daughter was born, I was lying in bed trying to get back to sleep after being up with her. I was thinking about what kind of world I wanted her to grow up in,” Tim told *Our Community*.

He remembers a childhood within an organised neighbourhood full of friendships, but found that as an adult he barely spoke to those he passed on the streets near his house. “I wanted the same childhood for my daughter – I wanted

her to feel safe and connected to the community around her.”

Inspiration struck, and Tim decided to start hosting an event to bring people in Kensington together. “I thought, ‘What are my strengths?’. Being a musician, it seemed natural to do something around that.” He wanted to keep it “genuine and down-to-earth”, and the Kensington Backyard Sessions were born.

To get started, Tim reached out through social media to anyone who might want to host a private musical event in their backyard, offering “copious amounts of high fives” in return. At first, he received a lot of suggestions to host ►



VIDEO: Young bluesman Ned Moran wows the crowd at Kensington Backyard Sessions with one of his original songs.

it in a local park or public space, but he was determined to stick to his original plan of holding it in a backyard.

“There’s something really nice about someone inviting you in and hosting you in their home. It changes the feeling of the event, and makes it more personal.” After the initial trepidation, a few people eager to be involved emerged, and interest increased after each session.

“The last piece of the puzzle was to raise money for local charities, to really give back to the community,” Tim says. He also encouraged musicians to open their cases at the end of each performance to accept donations for their performance.

Two years later, the initiative has been a huge success. Each month over spring and summer, Kensington locals gathered in a different backyard to share an afternoon in the sun (and sometimes in the rain), hear music from local artists, and munch on a snag. Ticket sales alone have raised \$5,500 for local organisations. The latest session saw \$670 donated to **McAuley Community Services for Women**.

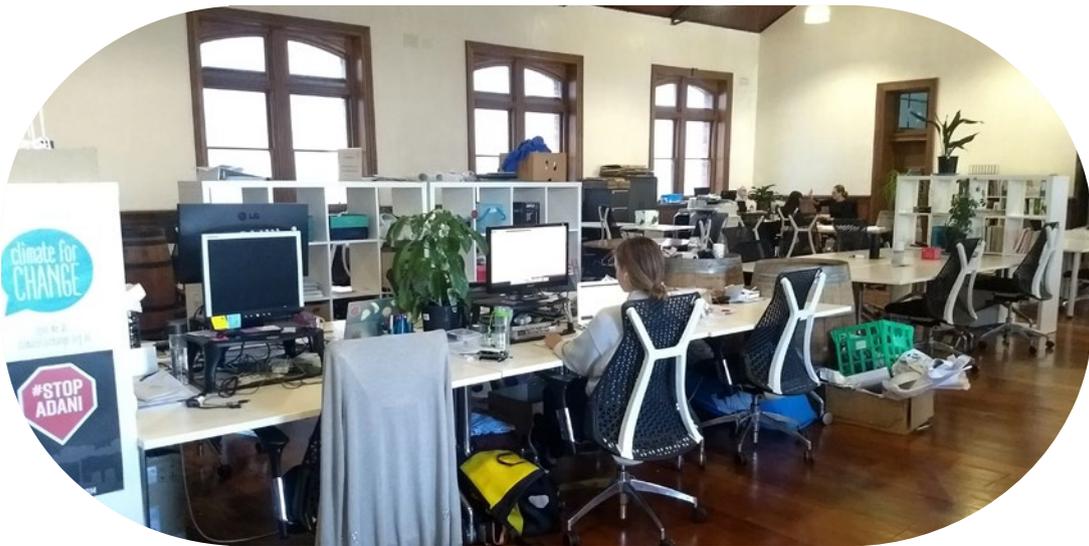
“It’s working for everyone,” Tim says. “We all feel closer and good about what we’re doing in our community.”

To anyone considering starting up a similar event in their own community, Tim advises, “Keep it simple.” He started out offering sausages for sale in addition to the main event, for example, but finished up including raffles and a barbeque in the ticket pricing. And where once a Kensington Backyard Session hosted three bands, now there’s just a single act at each session.

“Throw yourself in and stay true to that community vision,” he says. “The magic that comes out of expecting nothing in return for your actions means you actually get so much out of it.”

If you’re a Kensington local, or just want to know more, check out Kensington Backyard Sessions on Facebook: **www.facebook.com/kensingtonbackyardsessions**. ■

Co-locate to collaborate: the rise and rise of co-working spaces



Climate for Change is one of 12 social change organisations sharing a room under the banner Progress Central at Donkey Wheel House in Melbourne's CBD.

Co-working spaces are popping up across Australia, from **Cairns** to **Perth**. According to a 2017 University of Sydney Business School **report**, their popularity has exploded with the rise of freelancing and digital technology, and numbers have grown from just 75 co-working spaces globally in 2007 to more than 300 in Australia alone now.

So what exactly makes this kind of workplace different from a serviced office?

The main difference is that co-working spaces aim to create a sense of community within their walls. Members or tenants sign on keen to experience the benefits of co-location with other organisations, including opportunities for collaborating on projects or campaigns.

For this special collaboration-themed issue of *Our Community Matters*, we spoke to people from both sides of the co-working equation – the

manager and the member – for their insights into how this plays out.

The Community Manager: Sheree Rubinstein, One Roof

When Sheree Rubinstein started planning what would become **One Roof** in South Melbourne, she didn't set out to create a co-working space.

"I started my career in corporate law and realised very early on that there were opportunity gaps for entrepreneurship and leadership for women," she says.

She started running events and focus groups to garner ideas on how to best support women in the workforce, and it was here that the idea of a collaborative space first emerged.

Just over three years on, One Roof now houses more than 400 women who are freelancing or starting their own business. ►



Sheree Rubinstein identified “opportunity gaps” for women leaders and entrepreneurs. Now more than 400 women share the co-working space she created in South Melbourne.

So what are the benefits? Sheree says the “shared economy” aspect of co-working spaces appeals to organisations that are small or just starting out. “The feedback is always that it’s about the community and the support.”

One Roof offers meditation sessions and after-work drinks, and birthdays are always celebrated on-site. “It has become so much more than a co-working space,” Sheree says.

One Roof also provides professional engagement and development opportunities such as pitching competitions, curated connections and introductions, and evening workshops. These ensure the women within the One Roof community hold each other accountable as well as supporting each other.

“From the moment they become a member we learn as much as we can about them and support them. Whether it is new clients or partnership, it’s our jobs to ensure that they’re growing and succeeding. Our constant aim is to create an environment where women can thrive.”

The Community Member: Jackson Peck, Climate for Change at Progress Central

Jackson Peck works at Climate for Change, which is hosted in the Progress Central co-working space at Donkey Wheel House in central Melbourne. Climate for Change shares a large room with twelve other organisations working towards social change, including the Women Donors Network, the Muslim Collective and Greenpeace International.

Jackson says the appeal of the co-working space is the connections it provides, as well as the motivation generated by working alongside others. Since moving into Donkey Wheel House, the Climate for Change team has been exposed to new events, training opportunities and campaigns that they wouldn’t have had access to before.

“Co-working is particularly useful for organisations who have similar values because they can share resources and knowledge which are relevant to everyone,” he says. “We’ve met so many other campaigners and organisations working towards similar goals as us, which has helped us shape the work we’re doing.”

Staff at Progress Central act as the community managers, and Jackson says, “Without them, it wouldn’t be nearly as pleasant.”

Despite the odd tussle over meeting rooms, and the need to make do when another organisation is hosting a lot of people in the space, he says it’s been a valuable investment for his organisation, and is proving its value far beyond the rate they’re paying.

Are you interested in being a part of Our Community’s new co-working space, Our Community House? Take a look at our plans, and get in touch: <http://ourcommunity.com.au/ochouse> ■



Don't leave yourself vulnerable: perfect your organisation's password practices pronto.

How to manage passwords in your organisation

BY ALEX MCMILLAN, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER, OUR COMMUNITY

Much like the teenage nightmare where you find you've turned up at school naked, the modern not-for-profit manager's nightmare is turning up at work to find they've lost control of their social media account to a rogue employee who is posting about their displeasure to an audience of thousands.

Doesn't sound familiar? That means either you've got your passwords down pat (in which case you can move on to the next article), or you're blissfully ignorant of the potential headache that awaits you.

It's nice to be able to trust your employees, and placing restrictions here, there and everywhere

isn't particularly friendly, but the risks to which you expose your organisation by playing fast and loose with password protection increase with every year we march deeper into the 21st century.

The risks associated with lax password control aren't limited to social media accounts, although the thought of blow-back from a rogue tweet should be enough to make you sweat. Getting locked out of any spreadsheet or database can be an absolute nightmare, so ensure your password practices are implemented across all your whole organisation.

What to do: prevention

If you've gone through the problem of stolen ►



passwords once, it's likely you've already set up some safeguards. The best action is prevention, so make sure you:

- Develop good password practice. Ensure that when new employees come on board, they sign an agreement regarding their use of password-protected apps or documents. When they leave, remove their access to the relevant accounts, or change the passwords. Build into this process a regular audit whereby you take a look at everyone who has access to an account or password and ensure this information is kept up to date and safe.
- Ensure there are multiple ways to access an account. One account holder means one password, which greatly increases your risk of losing access.
- Utilise access levels for all account holders. Most platforms and tools allow you to assign roles to team members that will limit their ability to change account details such as passwords or billing information. It's very rare that an employee will need full access to an account, so ensure that only the people who really need it have it. In the case of social media, tools such as Hootsuite and Buffer make this process easy.
- Ensure the linked email address is safe. An easy way to ensure your account details cannot readily be changed is to connect the account to an email address that only a manager can access.

What to do: reaction

If for some reason you haven't heeded the advice laid out above, then you may find the following useful when it's time to hit the panic button.

Recover quickly. If you find yourself locked out of an account you once held, you should be able to get assistance from Facebook, Google etc to regain control over the account. If the only email address you've ever linked to the account

belongs to your rogue employee, however, you might have some trouble because of privacy provisions.

Respond quickly. If your only way forward is for the rogue employee to hand over the key, the sooner you get in contact with them, the better. In most cases, letting them know the seriousness of the situation will scare them into action.

Get a lawyer on board. Your communications will pack a little more punch if you have someone who can communicate the full extent of the ramifications unless they hand back the keys. ■

500 passwords not to use

Are you a fan of bond007, trustno1 or abc123? You're one of many, which makes you vulnerable online. Check out this data visualisation showing the top 500 passwords: <https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/top-500-passwords-visualized/>

To create a strong password, Google advises you should use a combination of letters, numbers and symbols; avoid personal information and common words; and avoid reusing passwords.



Crowdraisers lets individuals and groups create their own fundraising pages on GiveNow.

Fundraising tool gives people the power, for less

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY

GiveNow – trusted by 700,000 Australians who’ve used it to donate more than \$86 million to their favourite causes – has created a new tool that lets supporters raise funds, and it doesn’t hit them with big fees.

Fun runs, celebrations, physical and personal challenges, memorials and other events are already popular community fundraisers.

Now “Crowdraisers” – live since March on the GiveNow site – lets individuals and groups create their own pages for fundraising.

“We’ve called it Crowdraisers because it’s where crowdfunding meets fundraisers,” said GiveNow general manager Jarred Slomoi.

“We wanted to provide a professional fundraising

tool to support community organisations, one where organisations are vetted to ensure all the causes listed are legitimate community fundraisers.”

The cost to organisations is an all-inclusive 3.8% of each donation, significantly less than what’s charged by major players, who make big profits from others’ generosity.

“Other peer-to-peer fundraising platforms charge 5–10% per donation, plus set-up or ongoing subscription costs,” said Mr Slomoi.

“Crowdraisers, at an all-inclusive cost of 3.8%, is significantly better value for organisations than other players.

“And GiveNow still offers donors the option of making straightforward donations via its original ►



platform, which is completely commission-free, with only credit card fees passed on.

“We want to put more into the coffers of the organisations that deserve it most,” he said.

The features of the new Crowdraisers service were created in response to demand from the sector.

“People complained that other platforms not only charged exorbitant fees, but were ‘impossible’ to use,” Mr Slomoi said.

“Because we’re under the umbrella of Our Community, which has a mission to help not-for-profits, we’re not just a finance tool, but an organisation that really understands what groups need to fire up their fundraising.

“Low fees, a simple experience and an understanding what not-for-profits need underpinned our design.”

Mr Slomoi said other fundraising and crowdfunding platforms had “minimal listing requirements” and ran a greater risk of attracting fraudulent causes.

The 4000-odd organisations linked to Crowdraisers, on the other hand, have faced GiveNow’s strict vetting procedures.

“We only allow vetted organisations on GiveNow and Crowdraisers, so legitimate not-for-profits



GiveNow general manager Jarred Slomoi says Crowdraisers is underpinned by an understanding of the needs of not-for-profits.

don’t have to sit on the same platform as people raising funds for their holidays or for dodgy overseas ‘orphanages’”

Earnings from the 3.8% Crowdraisers fee would help generate a suite of future fundraising tools for not-for-profits and charities, Mr Slomoi said.

GiveNow’s original donations service remains free of charge.

Visit: www.givenow.com.au | email: service@givenow.com.au ■

How to change
your community,
your society
and your thinking

Kathy Kelly

May 28, 2018, 1.45pm

communitiesincontrol.com.au



Not-for-profits top the Innovation Index

BY JULIENNE PRICE, HEAD OF SCHOOLS AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR BANKING, COMMONWEALTH BANK

A new CommBank study has found Australian not-for-profits have a higher level of innovation activity than any other sector.

The *CommBank Not-for-Profit Insights Report* examines innovations being pursued by Australian not-for-profits, and the value innovation brings to individual organisations and to the sector as a whole.

The high level of innovation shown by NFPs reflects the constant pressure organisations are under to enhance efficiency as a result of demographic shifts, state and federal legislative changes, increased demand for support and services, and funding pressures.

These pressures have given rise to a robust sector that continues to embrace innovation and the benefits it can bring.

Key findings

- One in three not-for-profits plan to establish a social enterprise in the next 12 months
- Not-for-profits are changing their organisational dynamics, focusing on staff training and expertise
- Not-for-profits generate an average \$1.31 for every dollar they invest in innovation
- Organisations are harnessing the creative potential of their staff to drive innovation
- Innovative not-for-profits are radically overhauling their organisational structure to better harness the power of technology.



Julienne Price

The report's findings make it clear that NFPs are deeply committed to discovering new ways of supporting the community and their members – and this is echoed in our experiences with our not-for-profit clients at CommBank.

However, while not-for-profits were found to be both striving to innovate and at the forefront of adopting innovative behaviours, many organisations that took part in the survey were making organisational improvements, rather than implementing changes that could be classed as true innovations. This signals that even more opportunities can and will be realised by the sector in the months and years ahead.

You can [download the report here](#) to discover more about how not-for-profits are embracing innovation, and re-engineering their processes, services and cultures to better deliver sustainable outcomes for customers, members and communities.

CommBank is an Our Community partner. ■



Bonding, together

BY HESTA

An innovative investment partnership is helping families reunite safely – and HESTA is right behind it.

HESTA's specialist impact investment manager, Social Ventures Australia, has partnered with UnitingCare Queensland and the Queensland Government to create the Newpin Queensland Social Benefit Bond: the first of its kind for the state.

Investment in the bonds will fund the Newpin Program, which aims to safely reunite children in out-of-home care with their families through therapeutic centre-based support.

Delivered by UnitingCare Queensland, the program will focus on strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

“Operating in three centres across Queensland, this program will build capacity within Aboriginal communities and has the potential to reunite more than 230 children with their parents,” said UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross.

Strong bonds keep communities healthy

Social benefit bonds raise capital to fund programs that benefit the community. They give major investors like HESTA – and our members – an opportunity to contribute directly to better outcomes for those in greatest need while earning an investment return.

“Through impact investments like this, HESTA is creating lasting change for generations to come, as well as market-based returns for members,” said HESTA CEO Debby Blakey.

While these types of bonds are not intended to replace government funding, they can provide an additional source of funding to help deliver services and create more jobs in the community sector.

The bonds have already raised \$6 million to fund the Newpin Program.

Direct and indirect partnerships with the health and community sector are at the heart of what we do at HESTA. Together, we're working to build a better future for our members – and for all Australians.

HESTA is an Our Community partner. ■

Dear Agony Uncle

Our Community's thinker-in-residence, Chris Borthwick, answers readers' questions about constitutions and conflicts of interest.

A constitutional conundrum

We are approaching the AGM of our residents' committee in an Adelaide retirement village. We know that the current secretary will not be standing for re-election. Who is responsible for drafting the minutes of the AGM? All positions are declared vacant immediately prior to the election, so the current secretary will stand down – presumably having recorded the minutes to that point. Does the newly elected secretary take over to record the results of the election and subsequent business of the meeting, or does the former secretary continue until the end of the meeting?

The answer, basically, is that in this case (as in a lot of other constitutional issues) a strict reading of the constitution can lead to an absurd conclusion. In this case, the absurdity is that the association has no officebearers or any source of authority between the start of the election and the declaration of the polls – the kind of gap that leads states to create maxims like “The king is dead, long live the king”, where authority passes instantaneously from the old holder to the new.

Instituting a hereditary monarchy at the village to remedy your problem with the minutes might be overkill, so you'll have to fall back on the next solution: cutting the **Gordian knot**. Where there's an insoluble difficulty, bring out the duct tape and string and fix it quickly without anybody getting excited, and once you're through the problem, carry on as if it never happened.

Just fix it one way or the other – the old secretary does the meeting, the new takes over – then shake hands on it and move on. Nobody's going to yank your chain, whichever way it goes.



Chris Borthwick

Advantage, chair

I am a member of a lawn tennis club that is seeking to employ a new gardener. One of the applicants is the current chair of the committee. It is my view that if he was to be appointed as the gardener then it would be inappropriate for him to continue as chair and problematic for him to continue as a committee member. I have searched your website and while the Conflict of Interest Policy is relevant, I do not believe it fully covers this circumstance. Can you please point out to me some relevant literature on this matter?

Literature is unlikely to be that much help. Once you've taken on board the general principles, everything else is applying those principals to different situations, and every situation is different.

Here, for example, conflict of interest (COI) rules would say that the chair should declare his interest, which he has, and that he should take no part in the decision, which I imagine he won't. What happens after that is entirely up to the selection committee on the one hand and the board on the other. ►



There is no absolute bar on a chair being employed. If they're the best candidate, they should get the job. There's no absolute bar against an employee being chair, if the negotiations are at arm's length.

It may be that it will in practice be inconvenient – the chair won't be able to participate in discussions on many aspects of HR policy, for instance – but that's a matter for the board, a decision to be taken on its best judgement of the pros and the cons.

Insofar as legislation is relevant, it doesn't support your position. Several states have specifically legislated to permit employees to serve on the boards of incorporated associations, and the states that haven't don't expressly forbid it.

I'm taking no position on whether this is a good idea, but I am saying that's the question you should be concentrating on, rather than whether COI policies provide you with a mechanical context-free answer. ■

Share your sustainability story and win

If you're a Victorian not-for-profit or community organisation with sustainability on your agenda, check out the Victorian Premier's Sustainability Awards 2018.

Nominations are now open for initiatives in 10 categories, including education, environmental justice, health, community, and environmental protection.

Share your story with the rest of the state – and the country – and you could soon find yourself collecting a trophy.

Entries close on June 7. Visit www.sustainabilityawards.vic.gov.au/enter.



VIDEO: St Kilda Mums received a Victorian Premier's Sustainability Award for its work in saving baby-care items from landfill and providing them to families suffering hardship.



International leadership guru to take the stage at the community sector event of the year

Most of us want to act ethically, but it's not always that simple. We start with the best of intentions but then we bang up against the realities of what the boss wants, the clients are shouting at us, we're needed at home to sort out an issue with the plumbing, and we haven't had a proper holiday in a thousand years.

American leadership guru Mary Gentile knows all about it. She's pioneered a leadership development approach, Giving Voice to Values, that starts from the assumption that most of us mean well.

At Communities in Control in Melbourne next month, Mary will help us to learn the practical steps we can take to leap over, around or through the barriers that inevitably arise along the way between our ethical intentions and our actions.

Mary is Professor of Practice at the University of Virginia (USA) Darden School of Business. She's also senior advisor at the Aspen Institute Business and Society Program, as well as a management and leadership development consultant. Among her numerous awards, Mary was named one of 2015's "100 Most Influential in Business Ethics" by *Ethisphere*, and one of the "Top Minds 2017" in ethics leadership by *ComplianceWeek*.

Mary joins the stellar line-up of Australian and international change-makers, thinkers, household names and rising stars who will take the stage at Communities in Control in Melbourne next month.

Why you must attend

- Hear from and interact with Australia's best thinkers, leaders and doers
- Learn what's next – make sure your community is prepared for what's around the corner



Mary Gentile

- Get refreshed – participants rate this the best opportunity they get all year to recharge their batteries
- Get inspired – meet people who believe in the power of community, swap war stories, share solutions
- Get access – this is the least expensive conference of its type around.
- No other conference offers you access to this calibre of speakers and professional development at such a low cost
- Make a difference – this is your chance to influence the debate, to be part of the change.

Come and join us in Melbourne on May 28–29 .

Register now for Communities in Control 2018. ■

2018

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Meet the trainer: Gina Cirillo

You're Our Community's principal trainer for SmartyGrants. What's SmartyGrants?

SmartyGrants is software that helps grants funders to administer their grants, but it can be much more than that. By using SmartyGrants to ask (and classify) the right questions, we're revolutionising the way grantmaking is done in Australia and beyond. It's a pretty exciting time to be in grants.

Who uses SmartyGrants, and what sort of training do you provide to them?

Anyone who is in a position to give away money, from federal government departments to local councils to philanthropic organisations to universities to the local RSL – and we train all SmartyGrants subscribers who need training. That could mean anything from the basics in a beginner class to masterclass or custom training, where we fit the training to the organisation's needs.

In the past, you've worked as a guide at Melbourne Zoo and as a GIS mapper. What do zoos, maps and online grants management systems have in common?

Ha! I know you expected me to say "nothing", but they all provide some direction, whether it's to the butterfly enclosure, or to the main street, or to find the most efficient way to administer grants.

What's your own involvement in the community sector?

I worked for a while with the Brunswick Tool Library in Melbourne. It's a great local group that provides inner city residents, mostly apartment dwellers, with access to tools they have no interest in buying outright or no space to store, for those one-off DIY projects. Unfortunately, my involvement has dwindled because of my work travel commitments. ►



Your job takes you all over Australia and New Zealand, from Chinchilla to Norfolk Island. You must come across some really interesting organisations giving out grant money. What have been some of the biggest surprises?

Norfolk Island really stands out to me for so many reasons. I was completely enamoured of the place and its people.

I really liked the “bounty box” at the local RSL. The RSL isn’t an official grant funder or a SmartyGrants client but its impact on the community is undeniable.

I was out for dinner one night and went to the bar, and while I was waiting, a local was short by a couple of dollars for his beer and dinner. The bartender looked up to a small wooden box, tapped it twice and said, “Bounty box, mate”. The local opened the box, took out whatever he was short and paid the bill.

The bartender explained that when that guy has a couple of dollars spare he will replace what he took.

Cynical, I asked how many times the “house” topped up the bounty box. “Never,” the bartender said. He said it’s always in surplus, and every so often a local family in need comes in for a dinner or a night out on the box.

Now I’m not sure if this is just a story they tell mainlanders, but I happily believed it.

What’s the most memorable thing anyone’s ever said in one of your training sessions?

“You have changed my life!”

They were talking about SmartyGrants and moving from a very manual process to a much more streamlined online system – but I’ll take it.

What’s your teaching style?

Relaxed. It’s tricky, because we have so much information to give during our workshops and we know that people won’t remember every single thing we say, but if they remember a good

experience, a joke and where to find help when they need it, that’s a start. The rest will come with practise, the support of the service team and a well-documented Help Hub with video tutorials.

What’s the most significant lesson you’ve learned outside the classroom recently?

I was lucky enough to be part of an Our Community women’s leadership group that went to Bali recently. In Bali we met inspiring people doing amazing work. They came from varied backgrounds, brought with them a multitude of experiences, and were all working to improve their own lives and the lives of those around them. Each of showed a huge amount of strength and passion and the ability to rise above difficulties and circumstances that would defeat many of us.

We met Ibu Sari at the **PKP Women’s Centre**. She greeted us with a warm hug and a big smile, then proceeded to break our hearts, before feeding us until we were bursting. She told us her story: a divorced woman in a patriarchal society making her way in the world; marginalised, without rights, without money. Life for women in Bali who leave a marriage – for whatever reason, even if the husband initiates it – is tough.

PKP Women’s Centre is a place where women like Ibu Sari can receive (and give) help. The centre offers programs such as house visits, and classes in cooking, sewing, yoga and English.

Ibu Sari taught me about “quiet leadership”. She is formidable.

SmartyGrants’ slogan is “Revolutionising grantmaking”. Does that make you Robin Hood?

Ha! Well, it’s about influence, leadership, community, trailblazing and learning from each other, but khaki is not my colour.

Our latest courses, our trainers and scholarships info: <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/courses/> ■



Help transform your country community – and on a scholarship too

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) harnesses the collective power of government, business and philanthropic investment to improve the lives of Australians living in rural, regional and remote areas.

The Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA) is the best-practice network for the members of Australian not-for-profit boards, committees and councils, and the senior staff who support them. And it's behind the Diploma of Business (Governance), Australia's only accredited qualification in the field.

Bring those two organisations together and you've got an alliance that has the potential to super-charge communities in rural, regional and remote Australia.

In recognition of the alliance, ICDA is offering 100 scholarships of \$1000 each to help enable people living outside cities contribute to their communities by studying for the Diploma of Business (Governance).

Scholarship awardees will receive:

- A \$1000 reduction in fees for enrolment in the Diploma of Business (Governance). The reduced fee is \$3495 (inc GST).
- An iPad mini, pre-loaded with course materials

- Membership of ICDA, and access to its extensive suite of online governance resources.

Eligibility

Applicants must demonstrate

1. Their involvement with a rural or regional body or community organisation
2. How this course could help them to respond to challenges their community is facing
3. Reasons for wanting to improve their governance skills

How to apply

The application process is conducted online. Go to www.communitydirectors.com.au/scholarships.

Applications close at 3 pm AEST on Wednesday May 9.

Good luck! ■



Upskill

Thinking about updating your sexual harassment policy? #MeToo

Amid sexual harassment scandals at global charities such as Oxfam, the media are on high alert for breaches in Australia.

Recently, Victorian tourism icon Sovereign Hill was forced to **defend its policies**, while other organisations are taking the proactive step of trawling their records for safety's sake.

To keep you up-to-date, the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA) and legal partners Moores have refreshed the ICDA sexual harassment policy template, which you can download from among the human resources policies at the ICDA Policy Bank.

Join Moores principal Catherine Brooks, alongside ICDA executive director Patrick Moriarty, for a FREE webinar to learn how to activate your plan, covering:

- What we can learn from mistakes made by other not-for-profits
- Setting organisational values and behavioural expectations
- Understanding the board's role
- Training staff
- Creating an anti-sexual harassment policy with our free template
- Using whistleblowing services, acting on complaints, and terminating employment.

The free webinar starts at 1pm (AEST) on Friday May 4.

MORE: [Register for the webinar](#) | [Download the policy template](#)

Expand your network – and gain a diploma

Make 2018 the year you upgrade your qualifications and expand your network by studying for a Diploma of Business (Governance). Australia's only diploma-level governance qualification is designed specifically for existing and prospective not-for-profit board or committee members and the CEOs and senior staff who work alongside them. Check out the course start dates below and then **enrol now**.

Brisbane	May 7, August 1, October 15
Darwin	July 25
Hobart	May 21
Melbourne	May 21, July 16, September 3, November 12
Perth	May 7, August 1, October 15
Sydney	March 26, June 18, September 3 ■



Good Jobs

At [GoodJobs.com.au](https://www.GoodJobs.com.au), our mission is to connect purpose-driven people with organisations in the not-for-profit and community sectors. We want to help energetic, idealistic, and passionate people overcome obstacles and achieve their career ambitions and dreams.

Selected current vacancies

Community development professionals/ placemakers

My Neighbourhood (national)

My Neighbourhood provides community development (CD)/place-making services to major residential development companies operating on the urban fringe of major Australian cities. We work with new residents with a view to empowering them towards building a self-sustaining, resilient community by the time of project completion and developer withdrawal. We seek expressions of interest from suitably experienced and/or qualified CD professionals to join us. There is no specific work available at the moment but we foresee roles evolving soon.

For more information [click here](#).

Parish secretary

St John's German Lutheran Parish, Springvale, QLD

This job is a part-time position of 16 hours per week

This part-time role provides organisational and administrative support to the church leadership team, primarily to the pastor. German language proficiency is required.

For more information [click here](#).

Administration officer

Span Community House, Thornbury, VIC

This roles provides administrative support to Span Community House, where programs include Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE), Home and Community Care (HACC), Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), community activities, venue hire and more.

For more information [click here](#).

Data and reporting analyst

Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne

The successful applicant will have proven strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret data, provide reports and make recommendations to support policy submissions and enquiries from government, among other skills.

For more information [click here](#). ■



Board Matching Service

The board vacancies below are just a small sample of what's currently listed at both the Institute of Community Directors Australia website and Good Jobs.

Victoria

Treasurer, Gateway Community Services

Gateway is a small not-for-profit community organisation providing social support programs in the aged care and disability services sector. We are based at the South Kingsville Community Centre. We are seeking an experienced treasurer to strengthen our talented board.

Queensland

General board member, Queensland Community Care Network

Queensland Community Care Network manages programs aimed at helping the disadvantaged. Current programs focus on helping older people combat social isolation, connecting centenarians, and assisting mothers who are facing difficult times.

The organisation seeks an enthusiastic board member who has previous experience in fundraising and grant writing to help take it into the future.

South Australia

General board members, CareWorks (Churches of Christ in SA & NT Community Care Inc)

Through the love of Jesus Christ, and in partnership with others, CareWorks exists to provide practical assistance and to offer hope and opportunities to all people to grow towards well-being, wholeness and community. Its vision is of a fairer and more compassionate society.

CareWorks provides a range of community programs including financial counselling, emergency relief, and accommodation for people who must travel to Adelaide to receive medical treatment.

If you possess a strong Christian ethos, share our vision, and have specific skills in marketing, media, communications, fundraising, or business management, we would be pleased to hear from you.

New South Wales

General board members, Inner West Cultural Services

Inner West Cultural Services manages the Dickson St Space (a converted church hall), another building (currently a yoga school) and an enclosed garden in Newtown, Sydney. We also auspice cultural projects in the church hall in line with our constitution.

We are seeking board members who are keen to support arts and cultural practices, including visual art, music, dance, poetry and literature events.

Western Australia

Treasurer, Galleries West

Galleries West is a newly formed organisation dedicated to supporting, promoting and advocating on behalf of the not-for-profit and public galleries sector in Western Australia. It seeks a treasurer. ■

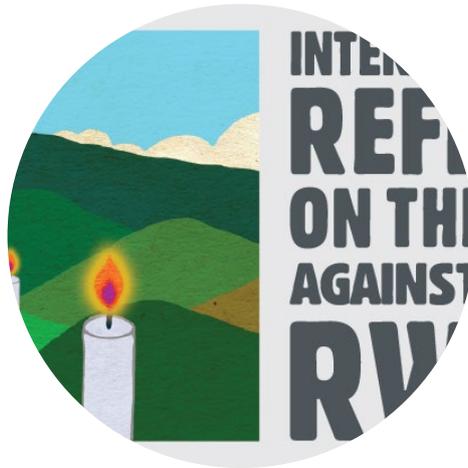
Some of our favourite community events and awareness-raisers for February and March.



APRIL 1–30

Supermarket-free month

Take the pledge to support local growers, makers and retailers – not corporate food giants – this month.



APRIL 7

International Day of Reflection on the Rwandan Genocide

Almost 1 million people, mainly Tutsis, were killed in the Hutu-led genocide in 2004. (One way to reflect on its horrors is to watch the film *Hotel Rwanda*, available on Stan TV.)



APRIL 11

World Parkinson's Day

The movement #UniteForParkinsons aims make a positive difference to the lives of people with this incurable disorder of the nervous system.



APRIL 16–22

National Advance Care Planning Week

If you were unable to speak for yourself, who would you want to speak for you, and what health care decisions would you want them to make?



MAY 21–27

National Volunteer Week

Many of the best aspects of life in Australia would grind to a halt without volunteers, so “Give a little. Change a lot.” That’s the theme of this year’s National Volunteer Week.



MAY 16–JUNE 14

Ramadan

During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink, smoking and sex from dawn until sunset in observance of one of the five pillars of Islam.

*Our Community Matters is your free community sector update, brought to you by **Our Community** – Australia’s centre for excellence for the nation’s 600,000 not-for-profits and schools, providing advice, tools, resources and training. It’s published on the first Wednesday of alternate months.*

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